

August 18, 1997

TO: Alice Tawresey  
Tom Green  
Edward Barnes  
Aubrey Davis  
Connie Niva  
Pat Patterson  
Linda Tompkins

FROM: Gerald E. Smith

SUBJECT: **Deputy Secretary's Focus Report**

The following is a brief summary of Department of Transportation events and items of interest from the past month:

### **OPERATIONAL ITEMS:**

#### **SEATAC THE TOPIC OF DISCUSSION AT AVIATION/PSRC MEETING**

WSDOT's Aviation Division made a "progress report" to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) on the Division's Technical Assistance Program required by SB 6422, the encroachment legislation passed a year ago. A PSRC resolution called for the State Department of Transportation to seek legislation similar to 6422 that would apply to Commercial Airports--specifically Sea-Tac. The Division reported that the law is being applied to all airports but Seatac and that it would be premature to seek additional legislation before the Division and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development refine the existing law and definitions contained there in.

#### **NEW FREIGHT MOBILITY COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING**

WSDOT's Freight Mobility Project Prioritization Committee (FMPPC) met for the first time as part of the agency's effort to implement the recommendations of the Legislature's Freight Mobility Advisory Committee (FMAC). FMPPC members represent cities, counties, ports, freight shippers, trucking, railroads, the Transportation Commission and the department. Topics at the first FMPPC meeting included a review of freight efforts over the past decade, an overview of FMAC's work, and discussion of the committee's charge. FMPPC will be addressing eligibility, selection and priority criteria for freight projects as well as the role of partnerships in a state strategic freight investment program. The TEP division is coordinating the department's technical support for FMPPC activities. TransAid is the lead division of the overall department effort, which also includes Aviation, Finance and Administration, Highways and Local Roadways, Planning and Programming, Public Transportation and Rail, and the Eastern Region.

The TEP staff is also supporting the department's implementation of FMAC recommendations through continued outreach to the state's freight mobility stakeholders. The staff is meeting with freight stakeholders around the state to discuss institutional and non-physical barriers to freight movement. These include government regulations, land use planning, employee work rules, permitting and licensing, as well as environmental

procedures. To date, meetings have been held with representatives of SeaLand, the Kent Chamber of Commerce Freight Mobility Task Force and the National Maritime Administration. Upcoming meetings will be held in the Spokane and Bellingham areas and are currently scheduled with the Yakima Valley Council of Governments and the South West Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO).

### **WSDOT ABLE TO TRAIN & CERTIFY TRAFFIC CONTROL SUPERVISORS**

The Evergreen Safety Council (ESC) has requested recognition by WSDOT as a training and certification organization for Workzone Traffic Control Supervisor Training and Certification (WZTCS). Staff met July 1st and determined that a uniform training and certification strategy for this program is essential.

Traffic Control Oversight Committee (TCOC) will approve training and certification requirements as well as periodically reviewing and updating training and certification materials and requirements. They will also design a Washington State Traffic Control Supervisor (TSC) card, establish minimum TCS instruction experience requirements, and maintain a registry of TCS instructors and cardholders in Washington state.

### **STATE ROUTE 529 CLOSING NIGHTLY FOR SIX WEEKS**

Single- and double-lane closures are occurring on northbound State Route 529 in Everett each day and night through the end of August. The multiple closures are necessary because crews are doing emergency repairs on the northbound SR 529 bridge that crosses the Snohomish River.

All 32 cables that support the bridge's counterweights were recently found to be excessively worn and in need of immediate replacement. Crews will build a steel structure to support the counterweights, disconnect the cables from the counterweights, and replace all the cables. Actual work on the cables can only be done when no traffic is on the bridge.

Until the cables are replaced, the bridge drawspan will remain closed to marine traffic, and northbound vehicular traffic will encounter lengthy delays since the I-5 detour route is already extremely congested due to this summer's bridge deck reconstruction work in Everett.

On southbound SR 529, motorists will encounter daytime single-lane closures while crews finish work on a construction project to replace the southbound bridge's electrical and operating systems.

### **SEISMIC RETROFITS BEGIN ON BELLEVUE VICINITY BRIDGES**

Work has begun on a contract to furnish and install seismic restrainers on nine highway bridges in the Bellevue area. Two of the bridges are on Interstate 405: the Northeast 60<sup>th</sup> Street pedestrian undercrossing and the Northeast Eighth Street undercrossing. One bridge is on State Route 202, over the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River. The remaining six bridges are on Interstate 90: both ramp bridges for 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast, the Eastgate to State Route 901 interchange pedestrian undercrossing, and the three bridges at the West Lake Sammamish Parkway interchange. All work should be completed sometime this fall.

### **WSDOT DEPUTY REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR RETIRES**

Robert D. Aye, Deputy Regional Administrator for the Washington State Department of Transportation's Northwest Region, retired effective July 31. He had supervisory authority over all the region's divisions, and had served in that capacity since April 1993.

Aye was assistant regional administrator for development from January 1990 to April 1993. He began his career with the then Department of Highways as a construction inspector in Bothell in 1967. Over the years he worked for the department in a variety of capacities at both the local office and headquarters levels, including almost five years as I-90 construction engineer.

Regional Administrator John Okamoto said, "Bob's variety of experience and managerial skills have been invaluable to the department. His abilities and dedication will be missed."

### **CONTRACT AD & AWARDS**

June 1997 bids were opened on three preservation projects and one facility project for a total of four new contracts. The total engineer's estimate was \$2,579,468.82, with total bids of \$3,278,577.76, or 27.10 percent above the estimate. There were 290 uncompleted contracts with a total work-in-progress dollar value of \$1,228,944,064.71.

### **DIGITAL PHOTOS SAVE TIME AND MONEY**

The Disautel project on SR 155 is in a remote area of North Central Region. Early in the spring the Project Engineer requested a field office be established in one of the maintenance area offices which is closer to the project, thus facilitating better communication. A computer was set up in the distant office to allow e-mail and the sharing of files. Yet even more helpful is the inspectors' use a Kodak DC50 digital camera to record progress and also problems on the project and download the photos to the computer, enabling the project office in Wenatchee to instantly view developments. OSC Materials Lab claims the digital photos taken by the project people have saved at least a thousand dollars in travel time for their office. Being able to see the photos rapidly greatly enhances the services provided by the lab and also the local project office.

### **WENATCHEE AREA PART OF A PILOT ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT**

North Central Region and OSC Geographic Services are partnering in a pilot orthophoto project. The project area, some 70 square miles, includes part of the Wenatchee Urban Area and extends east and south to provide a challenging variety of vegetation, rural/urban landscapes, and large vertical relief.

The project provides an opportunity to partner with Douglas County, who is working with WSDOT engineers performing preflight surveying and targeting tasks. An orthophoto is a scaleable image having map accuracy throughout the scene. The photogrammetrist first produces a digital terrain model (DTM) using stereo pairs of photos in the analytical plotter. The DTM is captured on a compact disc and is the basis of the orthophoto image.

Geographic Services is using this pilot project to compare the cost of flying our state highways in a new systematic north/south block coverage with the current method of flying only the state highways. The current method of piloting the photo aircraft down highway centerlines requires that the plane fly at about 125 mph and make time consuming turns for each tangent. The proposed block coverage can be flown at 200 mph over much longer lines of flight. Flight costs are reduced for negatives taken and a much larger area of interest is available to the DOT staff.

### **I-5 BRIDGE SHUTDOWN CALLS FOR TEAMWORK WITH WSDOT/ODOT**

Beginning September 16th and lasting for about three weeks, the northbound span of the I-5 Interstate Bridge between Washington and Oregon will be closed for replacement of lift system components. The replacement of the components is essential to the safety and integrity of the I-5 bridge.

The process used for bidding this project was unique in that it included not only a cost proposal but also a technical proposal. The cost proposals were scored based on the deviation from the average of all the bids. The technical proposals were scored based on the deviation from the average of all the bids. The technical proposals were evaluated and scored by a panel of seven people which included representatives from ODOT, WSDOT, AGC, and others. Once completed the two scores were added together to determine the best contractor.

The impact of the project will be tremendous on commuters, area neighborhoods, the shipping and freight industries and the area businesses. Recognizing the impacts, a multi-jurisdictional, bi-state public agency team developed a traffic management plan to lessen the impacts of the project. The group includes, ODOT, WSDOT, the cities of Vancouver and Portland, Clark County, Tri-Met, C-Tran, Metro, and the SW Washington Regional Transportation Council.

Key elements of the plan include diverting traffic to the southbound structure with the center lane made into a reversible lane that will be switched at noon and midnight; implementation of temporary HOV lanes on both the I-5 and I-205 corridors within both the states; increase transit service by both C-Tran and Tri-Met; signal modifications on arterials to facilitate interior movement within the cities and county; selected ramp closures; temporary use of Amtrak between Vancouver Station and Union Station.

#### **DEMISE OF APARTMENTS MEANS TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

The new bridge and roadway access to the Vancouver Lake area requires the acquisition and removal of the Liberty Court Apartments, located at 1800 Simpson Avenue on the lower west side of Vancouver. The apartment complex has been purchased by the City of Vancouver and the tenants have been relocated. Liberty Court is an eighty unit, four level complex with lengthy hallways, and varied room configurations. It includes a partial basement, dance floor and large game room.

Due to its age, the complex will be removed. This presents a great opportunity for emergency service agencies to conduct training. Beginning in approximately the middle of July, the complex became available to police, fire, and emergency management/service agencies for training. A controlled burning is scheduled sometime in the fall by the Vancouver Fire Department.

#### **CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS MOVE CLOSER TO COMPLETION**

The Eastern Region has over 30 active construction project underway this season. Several have already been completed including two overlays on SR 2 and one on SR 290 in the Spokane area. An overlay on SR 26 in Whitman County is essentially complete and a passing lane project on SR 395 near Colville is done. The final phase of the SR 2/Division Street widening project is moving along with final paving on the job almost complete. Island and sidewalk construction remains along with Portland Cement Concrete Pavement construction at the intersection of SR 2/Division Street and SR 291/Francis Avenue. An overlay on SR 291/Francis is now underway.

#### **MIS YEAR 2000 CONVERSION EFFORT UNDERWAY**

The upcoming millennium change brings uncertainty and concern when it comes to date sensitive computer systems. WSDOT has begun an agency wide effort to ensure WSDOT systems are Year 2000 compliant. Per Secretary Morrison's request, each organization has designated a Year 2000 Project Manager who will coordinate the inventory of systems and testing in the user's environments.

The MIS portion of the project will cover the mainframe environment, mainframe applications, level playing field software, client server systems, voice and video systems, all WSDOT servers and network equipment and system replacement projects. Although most MIS staff will be involved at some point during the project, the project is currently staffed with approximately 24 DOT employees and 38 contractors.

Communication is key to the success of the project. MIS is preparing a customer information packet that will give an overview of the Year 2000 problem and our plan for ensuring compliancy of our critical systems. To communicate project information and status a "Big Picture" wall has been established in the Legion Building's 3<sup>rd</sup> floor conference room. All project information is being posted there and is updated weekly. A WSDOT "Big Picture" wall will be displayed in the Olympia Service Center (OSC) building. The OSC version will include status on the entire WSDOT effort. In addition, MIS will keep the Year 2000 Exchange folder and the Year 2000 page on the intranet up-to-date, as well as provide a status report in the monthly focus report. A help desk has been established to log and direct questions, concerns and issues related to certification, conversion and compliance.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT OFFICE FILE BACKLOG REMAINS STEADY**

Risk Management open claims file count continues to remain at a high level and has remained above the 2,000 level for the third month in a row, although July is down a little in vehicle liability and in ferry passenger claims. Staff completion of in-training to a Claims Investigator 1, as well as a planned addition of an in-training Claims Representative position as the result of a budget decision package, will allow some redistribution of workload to more manageable levels for each of the investigators and claims representatives.

<u>Claim Type</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>
General Liability	810	840	834
Vehicle Liability	577	588	557
WSF Claims-Passenger	171	149	150
WSF Claims-Employee	139	170	135
Recovery Claims	388	339	343
TOTALS	<b>2085</b>	<b>2086</b>	<b>2019</b>
Recovery w/col. agency	303	319	313

### **UPDATE COMPLETE ON FUEL TAXES**

Update of the "Fuel Taxes: A State by State Comparison" was completed in July. This update shows the national average is currently 22.6¢ which places Washington at about average. When compared to the rest of the nation, Washington is currently tied for the eighteenth (18th) highest position with two other states, (South Dakota and Delaware). However, on August 1, the standing will move down to nineteenth (19th for all three states) due to a 5¢ increase in Michigan's fuel tax rate. Michigan's gas tax will go from 20.28¢ to 25.28¢. Distribution of the "Fuel Taxes" document is scheduled for the last week in July.

### **WSF TURNS IN JULY'S CUSTOMER SERVICE SCORECARD**

July 1997 (1 July through close of business 23 July 1997)

Service trips scheduled:	12,165
Service trips completed:	12,115
Completion rate:	99.59%
Without tide cancellations:	99.91%
Without tide & wx cancel.	99.93%

Year-to-date 1997 (through close of business 23 July 1997)

Service trips scheduled:	99,268
Service trips completed:	98,774
Completion rate:	99.50%
(Without tide cancellations:	99.55%)
(Without tide & wx canc.:	99.63%)

### **WSF IMPLEMENTS NEW PHONE SAFETY MEASURES**

On July 1<sup>st</sup> formal training and indoctrination was conducted with the core team that will put the International Safety Management (ISM) Code project together for Washington State Ferries (WSF) Operations. Implementation of the ISM Code for WSF's international route from Anacortes to Sidney, B.C., Canada is required by U.S. Coast Guard mandate by July 1, 1998. Modifications to terminal telephone lines have been completed system-wide. The modification gives all terminals (sans Sidney, B.C.) system four digit dial capability, an increased malicious call trace capability, increased system efficiency for information dissemination and a reduction in monthly telephone charges conservatively estimated at \$2,500/month.

### **WAGE INCREASE ISSUE AT A STALEMATE**

Implementation of the 3% Wage Increase: The parties (MEBA Licensed and Unlicensed) have reached impasse over the implementation of a settlement agreement signed earlier on the 3% wage increase. MEBA representative believe the settlement agreement entitles the employees to the 3% increase effective July 1, 1997. WSF management disagrees. WSF has asked for the issue of a Declaratory Ruling interpreting the statute that governs this issue. A hearing on the Declaratory Ruling is scheduled for August 21 and 22, 1997. WSF requested that the MEC expedite their decision so that resolution can come to this issue.

### **LOCAL AGENCIES CONSIDER ADOPTING MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT**

Formally known as the Public Works Emergency Response Mutual Aid Agreement, this arrangement enables participating agencies to support each other during disasters/emergencies to protect life and property when damage control is beyond the capabilities of an affected agency. The Agreement also permits participating agencies to coordinate resources and maximize funding reimbursements during these events.

The Agreement has been sent to all cities and counties for their consideration and adoption. Selected state agencies are also being contacted to determine their interest in being signatory to the Agreement.

TransAid will establish information on its Internet Home Page giving the status of agencies' approvals of this Agreement as well as background information on the Agreement. Hard copies of new signatory agencies will also be periodically transmitted to all signatory agencies.

### **SMALL CITY/TOWN SAFETY PROGRAM OFFERS GRANT AWARDS**

Each city and town with a population of less than 5,000 was awarded a grant in the amount of \$5,000 for transportation-related safety improvements. Examples of eligible projects included signing, paint striping, hazard elimination or protection, illumination, traffic control devices, pedestrian crosswalks, and sidewalks. The funds were made available because small cities and towns have had a difficult time receiving funding under the more traditional competitive grant programs, and local agencies were not required to provide local match. All 182 of Washington's small cities and towns took advantage of these grants with all funding expended.

## **WSDOT'S OWN HELPS IN PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

From September 1995 through the end of August 1996, Paul Sachs of the TransAid Management Systems Office was loaned to the FHWA, at FHWA's request, to assist them in implementing the local agency component of the ISTEA pavement management requirement on the national level. Paul was hand picked by the FHWA Pavement Division, Washington, DC because he is recognized as one of the leading experts of local agency pavement management in the United States. His work concentrated on researching and documenting how local agencies across the country were implementing pavement management. In the course of the project, he visited 21 states in 8 FHWA regions. Paul also provided local agency pavement management training courses during his assignment.

Paul wrote a report documenting this one-year assignment that was published this month and is available through the Northwest Technology Transfer Center. The report provides an overview of the current state of local agency pavement management in the United States. It also looks at future opportunities for the FHWA in assisting local agencies in implementing pavement management.

Paul was also asked by FHWA to participate in a National Workshop on Pavement Management, held in New Orleans from July 20 - 23 where he was asked to give a presentation on the work he did for the FHWA.

## **INSPECTION REVEALS FAILURE ON SR 529 BRIDGE**

As part of an ongoing contract on one of the SR 529 lift bridges (this bridge carries traffic over the Snohomish River at Everett) the Bridge Office removed and load tested one of the 16 wire ropes supporting the counterweight at one end of the lift span. The rope failed at one-third of the expected strength. Subsequent inspection of the remaining ropes revealed heavy corrosion and broken wires in an area normally concealed from visual inspection. As a result of this discovery, we have closed the bridge to marine traffic. This will prevent the ropes from being subjected to the dynamic loads experienced while lifting the span during marine openings. We have removed all concrete weights from within the two counterweights to reduce dead load on the cables.

The Bridge Office is presently working with the Northwest Region on a project to replace all of the lift ropes. Materials procurement is underway. We expect to complete replacement of the ropes by August 17, 1997.

## **TRUCKS NO LONGER ALLOWED IN THE LEFT LANE**

Development of a WAC Rule to implement the provisions of SSB 5177, left lane prohibition, is well underway and on schedule. On June 25, WSDOT and WSP met with the stakeholders to hear general concerns and comments, which were incorporated into the Rule draft within the scope of the legislative intent. The draft will now be circulated to the stakeholders prior to a follow-up meeting with them on July 18 to hear comments on the draft. Draft copies will also be circulated to the Regions and appropriate Department executives. The other element of implementation is public announcement, which is being coordinated by the Communications and Public Involvement Office. Public announcement was accomplished by the Department through media alert during the week of July 21 and by flyers for rest areas, ports of entry, weigh stations, etc., and by the various associations through their newsletters and other networks.

## **WSDOT INPUT SOUGHT ON NEW CRASH SOFTWARE**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), is presently developing a pedestrian and bicycle crash typing software package through the University of North Carolina Highway Safety

Research Center (HSRC). HSRC's work team, primarily local agency representatives, has been providing input into the software development. However, due to WSDOT's outstanding work in this area, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program was asked to attend a review meeting at FHWA's Research Center. Staff attended and provided a state DOT's perspective of how the software could be applied by regional traffic offices.

### **WSDOT LENDS TECHNICAL HAND TO COMMITTEE & TASK FORCE**

During the month of July, WSDOT's Heritage Program staff provided technical assistance to the Mather Memorial Parkway Steering Committee members and an All-American Road Nomination Task Force on three occasions. Both groups are contributing to the development of a nomination packet which is required as part of the nomination process to receive national recognition as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road. The packet is due to the Federal Highway Administration in December of 1997. On September 9th, the Heritage Corridors Advisory Committee will meet to hear presentations by this and other prospective nominees. To date, two other routes, the Mountains to Sound Greenway and Stevens Pass Greenway, have expressed an interest in seeking National designation for their routes.

### **MONTHLY WSDOT GRAIN TRAIN PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Total carloads shipped for June	8	
Total carloads shipped January through June		157*

#### **Grain Train Revolving Fund:**

Beginning Balance -	\$319,802.00
Current Month Revenues -	\$0.00
Current Month Expenses -	( \$0.00)
Ending Balance -	\$319,802.00

\*157 rail cars of grain is equivalent to approximately 449 truckloads.

### **SR 823 CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC IMPACTS DISCUSSED**

The mitigation of construction impacts on traffic during the upgrading of SR 823 between Yakima and Selah was the subject of discussion in a recent meeting in Yakima. Interested parties from the cities, county, transit, council of government, and WSDOT considered alternative transportation options. Discussion resulted in a three-pronged approach: (1) Communication of options using signage, radio technology, and one-on-one employer visits; (2) Use of subsidized vanpools--a good use for Selah's CTR funds; and (3) Creation of a temporary HOV lane through the construction site, to provide additional incentive for sharing the ride. This HOV lane would be the first outside the Puget Sound region.

### **RESEARCH COMPLETED ON ALTERNATIVE WORK OPTIONS**

The TDM Resource Center, working in partnership with the Commuter Challenge Program and WSU's Energy Program, recently completed research aimed at helping focus new efforts to increase use of telecommuting, flextime, and compressed work schedules. Telecommuting especially doesn't seem to be increasing at the rate that had been expected. TDM staff wanted to know why. Through a series of manager interviews, they found that, at least to some degree, use of alternative work options is fairly broad. Most employer programs, however, are set up informally - often just to benefit individual employees. Not surprisingly, it was also found that employee morale was the most frequent reason for allowing such options - not increased productivity or community benefits. Only a few managers are utilizing these options because they believe that they make good sense from a broader business perspective. Most all managers foresee a gradual steady expansion of the alternative work options. During the next two years TDM will work to enhance that



availability of such options among those employers currently found to be most receptive (high tech and other growth industries).

### **MARINE FUEL USE STUDY COMPLETE**

Staff from WSDOT's Economics Branch, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, and the Department of Licensing, have completed the marine fuel use study. The new marine fuel use percentage will be used to transfer motor fuel tax revenue from the motor vehicle fund to the Recreational Resource Account for the acquisition of boating facilities. The new marine transfer percentage dropped from 1.171 percent to 1.139 percent.

## **QUALITY ITEMS:**

### **NEW PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM IN PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

A new process improvement team has been chartered to look for improvement opportunities within the Project Development Consultant Administered Contracts process.

The team has been asked to utilize baseline data collected from a recently held workshop. The workshop consisted of individuals from the consulting community as well as WSDOT staff. The participants at the workshop were put in groups, and the Cause and Effect process improvement tool was used to identify contributing factors that lead to problems with consultant administered contracts.

The team will complete the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle by flow-charting the existing process, gaining profound knowledge through customer/supplier interviews, additional data collection/analysis, solution-building and testing.

### **“MAP” CAUSING A STIR IN THE WORLD OF MAINTENANCE**

WSDOT's Maintenance Accountability Process (MAP) is gaining national attention as the prototype approach to bringing quality assurance and performance measurements into highway maintenance. Several presentations have been made on the MAP which has led to WSDOT receiving dozens of requests for more information.

### **CUSTOMER INPUT KEY TO SUCCESS OF NEW PROJECT BILLING FORM**

Through participation on the Construction Engineering Billing Process Quality Team, TransAid Funding section was able to work closely with WSDOT accounting and local agency representatives to improve the customer project billing form. A subcommittee was formed to specifically address customer issues with the current project billing form that WSDOT uses. A survey was sent to over 300 agencies asking for input and the responses were analyzed using a quality evaluation matrix. Due to Year 2000 resource requirements, not all solutions could be implemented right away.

WSDOT's customers overwhelmingly asked for a better presentation of project billing history. The current information display was confusing, and sometimes inaccurate. A separate Customer Statement was designed that would show a customer such information as outstanding balances, credits on account, advances, and other useful data. Some changes were as simple as adding a contact name and phone number, and a payment due date.

A separate information sheet and other data will be supplied that will outline the basic responsibilities and requirements for each agreement. This will help local agencies in the

event of staff turnover or lack of experience with WSDOT's billing processes and procedures.

Implementation is taking a phased approach, with the simplest items being added to the current form July 1<sup>st</sup>, and the more complex items such as the customer statement, taking several months due to design, layout, and programming.

#### **APPRAISAL PILOT WORKING WELL FOR REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

Back in 1970, when pizzas and appraisals were relatively cheap, the legislature provided that WSDOT pay up to \$200 toward property owners' appraisals when trying to purchase their property. Today, such appraisals would cost several times that amount. To update the legislation could have substantial impact on all local public agencies. Therefore, WSDOT decided to address the inequity administratively by conducting a one-year pilot which authorized the regions to pay up to \$1,000 to property owners for their appraisals. WSDOT regional Real Estate Office managers evaluated this approach and felt it is an excellent tool to aid in their negotiations.

#### **TQM TEAM MEMBERS CONSIDER NEW CONSULTANT MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS**

Chuck Ruth participated with the Northwest TQM Team Members to consider new consultant management concepts. The process owner did an excellent job of explaining his vision for the team and expressed a strong belief that WSDOT should be using consultants as a supplement to the regular workforce and not as the primary method of preparing PS&E's. The team members enthusiastically supported this position on this issue. Process owner and staff also did an excellent job of acquiring profound knowledge for the team to consider through a joint WSDOT/CECW brainstorming session that occurred last March.

#### **PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM ESTABLISHED FOR CONTRACT ADS & AWARDS**

A process improvement team has been established to consider WSDOT's Contract Advertisement and Award process. The team will develop a thorough knowledge of the contract ad and award process and make a recommendation on how to improve the process based on that profound knowledge. The recommendation should ensure successful program delivery by accomplishing the following: maximize the efficient and effective use of resources; provide a dependable process; maintain flexibility; provide ultimate customer satisfaction; ensure that the contract ad and award process facilitates competitive bidding; and provide statewide coordination. The team's first meeting was June 18, 1997, and the proposed completion date for this effort is September 1, 1997.

#### **WSDOT DESIGN ACADEMY UNDER DEVELOPMENT**

In conjunction with evolving design processes and procedures, as well as changing engineering workforce, WSDOT's Design Office, in cooperation with the regions, is developing a Design Academy. Patty Snodgrass from the Olympic Region Design Office was enlisted to coordinate definition and development of the Academy. She has facilitated a natural work group including Region staff to develop an academy that will provide designers the necessary tools and expertise to deliver projects.

The Design Academy Committee (DAC) is comprised of one representative from each Region and OSC. This seven-member team met for the first time in February 1997 and has focused on developing training that will be beneficial, effective, and innovative. The DAC mission statement is: *To enhance the continued professional growth of the department's designers by providing a statewide venue to share design experiences through the use of*

*structured classes, informal discussions, and open forums.* The intent is to offer the academy on a yearly basis giving all designers the opportunity to attend.

The team's goal has been to provide training that meets the needs of all Regions. A list of proposed workshops developed by DAC was distributed to each region for review and comment. DAC finalized the list of courses and approached various WSDOT experts to provide training. There are eight four-hour workshops and instructors have been selected and currently developing course materials. Each student will attend all eight workshops. Two presentations and a tour of the Traffic System Management Center will also be offered in the evenings. The two presentations will cover roundabouts and avalanche control.

Forty applicants will be selected to attend the first academy. Each region was allotted a specific number of spaces based on the number of engineers in their region. Attendees will be selected by their region. Applications have been distributed and region selections will occur by August 15.

There will also be a "sneak preview" for the Region Project Development Engineers and OSC staff on August 19. Each instructor will present a one-hour, abbreviated version of their course.

#### **P&PSC "TOOL KIT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT" IN DEMAND**

A subcommittee of the P&PSC Quality Steering Committee developed a very simple Q2000 user friendly resource book entitled *Tool Kit for Continuous Improvement* for P&PSC staff to use in daily business. It primarily contains Q-tool examples, along with some simple presentations of the most common Q2000 methods (i.e., Blueprint, PDCA). Since its publication and initial distribution just this last week, P&PSC is being inundated with calls from other Service Centers, the Regions, and other agencies (including OFM) for copies. Copy orders can be placed through the WSDOT Printshop with respective office/agency charge codes.

#### **GOOD NEWS ITEMS:**

##### **NEW HANDBOOK OFFERS PC TIPS**

Customer Support Services is participating with Planning and Programming Service Center, Field Operations Support Service Center and TransAid organizations via a quality team format and/or customer interviews to establish Support Level Agreements (SLA). These documents establish customer expectations for service, measures for services provided and service commitments by Management Information Services Workstation Support staff. The documents also establish customer responsibilities in use of their workstations. A feature of the SLA is the establishment of a self help document and "PC Handbook". The handbook is envisioned to be available via the Intranet and will be called "MicroTips". The MicroTips and book will be available toward the end of August.

##### **BEST REST AREA NAMED & RECOGNIZED ON TV**

The Indian John Hill Safety Rest Area was recognized by King 5 TV's Evening Magazine as the Northwest's Best Rest Area. The TV spot included comments from our customers on how clean and pleasant the facility is. This service provided to the traveling public is truly needed and appreciated. South Central Region and the safety rest area attendants should feel especially proud to be the recipient of these "kudos"!

##### **SR 522 TRIP REDUCTION PROGRAM ENDORSED BY COUNTY OFFICIALS**

A proposed five-year trip reduction program for SR 522 (Lake City to Monroe) was endorsed by the “SeaShore” King County sub-area group for inclusion in the System Plan update. This TDM program would include development of new transportation options, increased advocacy for alternative work options, and highly focused promotion and educational efforts. The proposal was jointly developed by the Bothell Transportation Partnership (TMA) and the TDM Resource Center at OUM. A cost /benefit analysis of the proposal will be undertaken in the near future, to be compared with more traditional projects. Should the comparison look favorable, OUM will work with the Northwest Region to include the proposal in the Region’s “Book” of projects to be recommended for funding during the next biennium. This is the first time that a TDM project is being considered within the same process used for traditional highway projects.